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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000181

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FOR GUINEA TASK FORCE, AF/W, AF/EX, CA/OCS, DS/IP/AF  
PLEASE ALSO PASS TO AID/AFR, PEACE CORPS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/15/2017  
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SUBJECT: TFGV01: SITREP 41: GUINEA UNREST, FEB. 15, 2007,  
1130 GMT

REF: CONAKRY 177 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: POLOFF JESSICA DAVIS BA, REASON 1.4 (b,d)

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Situation on the Ground  
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¶1. (SBU) As of this morning, there were a few military patrols in several areas of Conakry. Most Guineans in the capital are respecting the curfew and do not circulate between the hours of 1800 and 1200 the next day. During the curfew, the military patrols the neighborhoods, often firing warning shots. A February 15 morning radio announcement appealed to the armed forces to continue to take necessary measures "to mobilize to ensure peace". This morning, like yesterday, there was some pedestrian traffic and women selling cooked food, bread, and small items. Market stalls, stores, and shops remain closed.

¶2. (C) Since the "state of siege" was implemented February 12, there are numerous credible reports of significant violence against civilians by military forces. In Conakry, this is especially true in the areas of Cosa, Bambeto, and Hamdallaye -- the sites of the most serious clashes between security forces and the population during the strike and last weekend. Military officers reportedly enter homes and private property by force in search of "bandits," and some troops allegedly have committed severe human rights violations. They routinely fire shots near residences; spent rounds have caused injury and death.

¶3. (C) The airport remains open, and international flights are allowed with the approval of General Kerfalla Camara, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Post is prepared for arrival of milair flight this afternoon at 1600. Air France is a go so far for this afternoon, and additional Air France flights are likely over the coming days. SLOK Air, a regional carrier, is reportedly operating several flights a week between Conakry, Abidjan and Dakar. Air Ivoire is operating today. The Moroccan government sent a military aircraft to Conakry to facilitate the departure of Embassy family members and private Moroccans who wished to depart. The Egyptian Charge d'Affaires told Poloff he is planning a similar operation with Cairo.

¶4. (SBU) While the borders are nominally closed, there is some traffic across many of Guinea's land borders. Local residents, including American citizens, have approached military representatives on the ground to facilitate travel. The lack of clarity on the border situation is symptomatic of the lack of government control in all aspects of the

functioning of the state. We would ask that our embassies in neighboring countries approach their border authorities, if they have not done so, and query status on that side. The port remains open, according to the Guinean military, but it is only minimally staffed.

¶15. (SBU) The government of Guinea is largely shut down. While the ministers remain in office, their employees cannot get to work because of the curfew.

¶16. (C) Civilian acts of looting and property destruction continue in Conakry and in the interior. In Labe, residents looted the World Food Program warehouse. Targeted property destruction continues on persons who are associated with the Conte regime. The houses belonging to Conte's third wife, Minister of Justice Rene Gomez, and several representatives of the National Assembly were all destroyed. One of our FSNs, currently in Labe, reported that large segments of the population turn out to witness these "celebrations,,led by Guinea's youth. Most of Guinea's ministers have registered significant property losses. Foreign Minister Mamady Conde told the Ambassador that he had "lost everything" he worked to obtain over his years of service.

¶17. (C) Significant disturbances were also reported in the mining areas. BHP Billiton Director Rainier Engels confirmed to the Ambassador that the company is evacuating all of its expatriate staff from operations in Conakry, Sangaredi, Nimba, and Boffa. In Sangaredi, where Global Alumina also has operations, one AmCit is present and remains safe. A Conakry-based Global Alumina team is planning to travel to Sangaredi today, with a military escort, to bring the AmCit and the rest of its team to Conakry.

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¶18. (C) Since February 12, the Guinean Bauxite Company (CBG) has ceased its operations in Kamsar. Post is working closely with the company (Alcoa and Alcan own 51% of CBG) to ensure the government extends permission for its small corporate plane to evacuate expatriate personnel (including two Amcits) to Senegal. The third CBG American citizen we are aware of has traveled to Conakry and has a seat on the milair flight out today.

¶19. Guinea holds 2/3 of the world's known bauxite reserves, the raw material for aluminum. Since December, the price of alumina has doubled on the world market reaching over \$400 per ton yesterday.

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Political Update  
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¶10. (SBU) The Presidents of Guinea's National Assembly, Supreme Court, and Economic and Social Council, under the auspices of General Kerfalla, convoked Guinea's trade unions, Patronat, and religious leaders to meeting on February 15 at 1400 at the Palais du People. The invitation was announced on national radio, which stated "all security measures would be taken" for the participants in the meeting.

¶11. (C) Serah Rabiadou Diallo, General Secretary of CNTG, told PolOff February 14 that she would not attend any meeting unless Kerfalla makes the invitation and provides military escort. Under the state of siege, all meetings and public gatherings are outlawed. Diallo said, "They may use this as the perfect opportunity to round all of us up, kill, arrest, or otherwise sanction us." In his meeting with the Ambassador (septel), Kerfalla advocated the resumption of dialogue and took responsibility for the participants' security. We have urged Diallo and the other union leaders to attend the meeting.

¶12. (C) Poloff met February 14 with union and political party leaders to be reported septel. The leaders agreed that

contrary to rumors, the synergy among unions, political parties, and civil society remains strong because it reflects the voice of the larger population. All admitted that current restrictions on movement and communication make it virtually impossible to set a common strategy. Diallo expressed concern that they would go into today's negotiations unprepared and without a firm position to advance.

¶13. (C) We understand that National Assembly President Aboubacar Sompore plans to ask for the names of acceptable prime minister candidates. Upon reaching consensus, the government reps would propose these names to Conte. Current Prime Minister Eugene Camara would resign so that Conte could appoint the consensus candidate and lift the state of siege. We will closely follow the discussions to see how Sompore's plan plays out.

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Mission Operations  
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¶14. (SBU) All American employees in country are at work today at the Embassy. Staff are carpooling to work, hitting the road as soon as the curfew for diplomats is lifted at ¶0800. On February 14, during the 0800-1800 timeframe, we successfully made water and fuel deliveries to residences. We expect to receive a fuel delivery tomorrow from Total, topping off our supplies. At present, all employees have sufficient fuel, water, and food. One local grocery will be open mid-day (selling goods out the back door), and we have organized a van run for replenishment of basic items.

¶15. (C) EAC met at 0900 to review developments. Most of today's efforts will be in preparation for the arrival of the military aircraft this afternoon. The flight will bring Dakar Consul General Beth Payne, who will contribute her expertise to our Consular staff in managing the arrangements for the transport, tracking, and protection of AmCits.  
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